Kurt Riezler

Professor of Philosophy in the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

Dear Uncle:

I am in despair. I had to make a speech on "What is Freedom." I got away with it by talking about the rights of men not being property rights of absentee owners. That was easy, but I must confess I do not know what freedom is. I went through mountains of books and asked whomever I could. All reading and questioning merely made the muddle in my brain worse. In politics and economics everybody says something different: government interference in business, unions, collusion, rackets, monopolies, wage slavery. Manifestly each refers freedom to just that sort of limitation from which he wishes to be free. I looked into history. But history whirls around the great names through ever changing sorts of servitude. I went to science—it is worse. If causal determination rules nature and man responds but to stimuli, there is no place for freedom. If flowers are not free, why man? Can I go east or west? Do not make fun of me. Answer my question. What is freedom? It is a very serious matter.

Yours eagerly,

Joan.

Dear Joan:

It is indeed a very serious matter. The muddle in your brain mirrors the muddle of our time. You throw a basketful of questions at my unfortunate head. You expect a definition, but there is no definition you would be willing to accept. You

know what freedom is in your heart, and you even know that you know. Since you are pregnant with this knowledge you ought to ask me as but a midwife to help you push your own baby through your brain.

"*Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur*," says Vauvenargues. Since freedom is such a "grande pensée," we must look for it at its source. It often happens, as in your case, that our brains block our hearts. First, I must rid you of your preconceptions.

Freedom has nothing to do with causal determination. I doubt that you have anything precise in mind when your lips utter the word "causality." Let us assume it means that laws govern the succession of happenings in time. Causal determination is a concept of physics. Here it has an accurate meaning. I'm sorry, but I must use the language of the physicists. Physics starts from a manifold extended in space-time and co-ordinates physical properties to the points of this continuum. Both points and properties are represented by numbers. The numbers depend on one another in a specific way. If a closed system is such that the numbers describing a three-dimensional cross section at one time determine all the other numbers representing the system at any other time, physics speaks of causal determination. It is by no means the only possible sort of order. If physicists, as they do nowadays, find that the phenomena in the world of atoms and electrons do not fit into this particular scheme, they speak of indeterminacy. Physicists are sound and reliable people. Psychologists who apply the physical scheme of reality to human behavior are less reliable. Physicists themselves do not like to go beyond their knowledge. They neither say that causal determination means compulsion nor that indeterminacy means freedom. Compulsion and freedom presuppose beings in relation to which a movement or a change is free or compelled. There are no such beings in the conceptual scheme of physics. It is the lack of such beings that excludes both compulsion and freedom from the physical aspect of reality. Physicists are far from pretending that their conceptual scheme is final and covers the whole of reality. It is a preliminary aspect. A dehumanized science that dissolves man into

a compound of physical events should speak of determinism and indeterminism but neither of compulsion nor freedom. If, however, you refute such a dissolving of man and cling to the belief in such entities, you transgress the conceptual scheme of physics. Then happenings, changes, movement, "causes" are what they are in relation to this entity. Freedom and compulsion obviously depend on this relation. Such an entity may be a being that can be compelled because it can be free, that can be free because it can undergo compulsion. The physical aspect, whether it means causal determination or not, can never decide for or against such an assumption.

Another of your questions seems to have grown out of the same habit of your brain. Referring your actions to a vague idea of determining "causes" your brain connects freedom with deliberate choice. You may have the choice of going east or west and yet your heart is far from feeling "free." You may have no choice and yet feel free.

Assume that a man has what you call the "free choice" to turn to the left or to the right. This means there are no external conditions that force him to take one way or the other. That is "freedom from." I call this negative freedom. Let me assume that man cannot make up his mind where to go. He is labile. I would not say that he is free. He lacks in his negative freedom what I should call positive freedom—and that is the kind of freedom you wish to know about. Being labile this man may be a slave. Every casual mood is his master. Do not expect to find much freedom among the idle rich, who have the choice of going to Hawaii or Egypt, are capable of yielding to any desire, responding to any stimulus, pursued by fashion, boredom, and curiosity. They follow and desert every lead. If they teach you anything about freedom, they only do so by means of what they lack.

There is another man. He knows what to do; he has no choice; in his heart is necessity. And yet you may grant him the positive freedom, which the other fellow lacks. The answer he gives to conditions is his answer; it is his entire nature that responds. Let us compare the two men. If you insist upon speaking of "causes" without defining "cause" I would say:

the mere absence of a determining cause for the first man is not freedom; the mere presence of a necessity for the second man is not servitude. Lability does not mean freedom, or such necessity slavery. Not absence or presence of determining causes but the relation of such so-called "causes" to that strange entity called self decides between freedom and compulsion. The lack of determining causes without such entities no more means freedom than causality with the presence of such entities means compulsion.

You could and should say not choice but deliberate choice. Man, the only being capable of knowing what he does, can deliberate about means and ends. That is his distinction. Thus he is free. But look a little closer into our deliberate choices! Are not most of them concerned with means; if with purposes, the purposes too are means, not ends. Calculating means for means, weighing chances and risks, amounts of pleasure and utility—is this really to be called freedom? No. Freedom, again, is not in our deliberated responses but in a certain relation between our responses, whether deliberated or not, and the strange unity we call self. Let a response originate in the whole of our being as a response of this whole to the whole of the situation. This might have something to do with freedom. I do not wish, however, to follow this line further. Even if by inquiring into this specific relation between our selves and our actions we might be able to dress up a sort of "definition," it would hardly help your heart to deliver its knowledge. I dismiss causality and deliberate choice. Freedom is not "freedom from"; even if this negative freedom were absolute—containing no compulsion whatsoever—man would still not be free; perhaps even no longer capable of being free. Freedom must have a positive meaning, and it may turn out that only in an activity that overcomes compulsion is your soul capable of realizing this positive meaning. Freedom must be an end in itself, something in your soul that you long for and cannot express.

Let me begin again, and in another tune. What is nearest to your young experience? When you ride out West, and the wind strokes the waving fields and God's sky, vaulted above, edges

the blue line of the Rockies, in your joy and the joy of your horse is something your heart calls freedom.

Lasst mich nur auf meinem Sattel gelten
Bleibt in Euren Huetten, Euren Zelten
Und ich reite froh in alle Ferne
Ueber meiner Muetze nur die Sterne.

Lying on your back somewhere in the mountains you may envy the eagle soaring over peaks and valleys. Are you not fond of skiing? You race down a slope in Sun Valley, turning round or jumping over every obstacle, provided you are master of your skis, through the showering snow between silently glittering trees—drinking in the white world with all your senses and slaking your world thirst.

Such examples contain some limbs of the body of freedom. I shall be cautious and say merely that they link somehow the wide world to activities in which you feel the world to be yours. Widening your soul, you own the world, and one and the same horizon embraces your self and the world your soul craves.

Such moments of elation are bound to be short. We never own the world. If we enjoy elated moments we owe it to less elated days—we enjoy them as finite beings that are limited on all sides. I must bring down the silhouette of freedom from the sky to the dark earth.

The peasant owns the soil of his father. In European mountain valleys, apart from the highways of history, you can discover the signs of freedom in many a proud and weather-beaten face, molded by labor and endurance. The man has his own manner of politeness, he is even tolerant; he may let you have your own way but be quick to tell whoever intervenes to go to hell. He depends on nature. An avalanche buries his barn, a gale fells his trees, his grass dries up. Hardships precede and succeed opportunities. Guard yourself against romanticizing. Limit his negative freedom, restrict his opportunities, nevertheless you cannot help granting him a bit of positive freedom that is more than freedom from something. His world is small, but it is his. Inherited codes and habits are part of him.

He complies with nature and her laws. His freedom is a particular relation between himself and his world. It is, however, not a state but a process—something to be acquired day by day, not to be possessed and preserved. Look at his face—he owes to the resistance he daily overcomes even the freedom he seems to enjoy as a state of mind in moments of rest. Freedom is never concrete except in the making.

I do not want you, however, to tie the concept of freedom to the farmer economy. It resides in a particular relation between man, his activity, and his world. Since the tractors and large enterprises deprived the Jeffersonian farmer of his opportunities, turning the average American from farming to salesmanship or industrial labor, human freedom has been put to a severe test, not because the farmer has gone but because the greater part of mechanized labor destroys that particular relation between man, his work, and his world. Instead of looking back to the farmer ideal we should try to restore that relation under new conditions. Spare time, week ends, even a share in the property will not do. Freedom must be inside, not outside, our job. The human soul is flexible and ingenious. It can animate even machines. We must succeed in extorting from our machine economy conditions in which work can be the worker's world as it is the peasant's. That is what human freedom will continue to demand.

You may wonder that I extended the example of the European peasant to that of the American pioneer who built up his world in a wilderness. My reason is simple. You might interpret the freedom of the American pioneer as freedom from codes. The European peasant is tied to traditions and inherited norms; if he is free it is by virtue of his relation to these traditions. His norms and habits, though inherited, are his own. We must inquire into the interplay between freedom and norms. There seems to be and yet not to be a contradiction. Though norms limit our freedom, absence of norms would be but license. That is a thorny problem demanding a cautious approach.

We are born into our language; we learn it and yet it is our own, part of ourselves. Its rules are our rules. As its slaves we

are its masters. What is a language besides being means to all sorts of ends that again may be means? Let me take speech as speech and disregard purpose. Every language is the whole of a world, a space in which our souls live and move. Each word breathes the air of the whole. Each is open toward an unbounded horizon. A language is not an aggregate of words and rules. It is a potential world, an infinity of past and future worlds, merely a frame within which we speak and can create our world, actualizing ourselves and our language. I do not pretend that we always do—good poets do it for us.

Thus we can say: The rules of our language are the basis on which the kind of freedom we can enjoy in speaking becomes possible. The first human being who endeavored to speak, creating the first word, was not more but less free than we. He had not the marvel of a preformed world, the whole of an articulate spirit, pregnant with unborn worlds. It is on this basis that we succeed in tinging an infinite horizon with the color of the individualities of our egos, groups, peoples, nations, and at the same time, in enlarging these always narrow individualities to the whole of a cosmos. That is just what "freedom" means, applied to our speaking. We talk neither of freedom when the schoolboy disobeys grammar nor of servitude when he submits to its rules. The boy would be right to complain of servitude if his teacher choked the living language into a dead model of academic rules. The real rules, the inner spirit of our language, enable our speaking to be free. They are the soil in which the worlds we create grow and feed. Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, neither invented their languages nor merely used a finished tool with greater skill. They molded casual habits, contingent manners, into a unity that embraced the breadth of the human cosmos, colored things, animated the inanimate, seized the unseizable—they built a world, leaving a heritage to their peoples, in loyalty to which their peoples participate in their freedom.

Thus it is not by obeying rules that we are slaves, nor by disregarding them that we are free. Not the rules as such but our relation to them determines whether in obeying or disobeying we are free or slaves. The peasant is free because the codes

of his fathers are his; he need not even consent to abide by them. They are part of his nature. If his son revolts, the rules become fetters. By breaking the fetters, however, his son gains merely a negative freedom, freedom from these very fetters. He will be free only by giving and following norms that are both his and the norms of his world.

People who live by dead conventions look at the Bohemian as freedom's favorite son. The Bohemian is free from codes he dislikes. The Bohemian himself, bored by petty clashes and meticulous disorder, probably holds another view. Whenever a Bohemian community is free, devotion to a cause has created norms.

You are fond of music. Is not Mozart audible freedom, freedom's resounding joy in freedom? You feel it though it refuses to be put into words. I do not attempt such a feat. I only want you to consider that this perfect appearance of freedom presupposes the elaborate system of tonality as a realm of norms, analogous to the marvel of a perfect language, and like language a slow product of a long history. On this basis Mozart's freedom makes its appearance as the whole of a world. Listening to this music you are "in" this world—all other things fade away. This world, however, is your own being, is life, actualized in a world of sounds. Of course you have a distinct feeling of Mozart's individuality. You listen to a sonata; it must be one of his. No one else could have composed it. And yet this individuality is not Mozart the individual. It is not merely the particular difference of this man from other men. The individual has disappeared in the uniqueness of a world. That is a strange and elusive thing. Mozart, like all artists, actualizes much more than a limited self or even a merely individual world. The world he creates is a world of many others, of us all, not only the world of his time and his people. You might almost say he got rid of himself, transcending the narrowness a mere ego cannot help being.

Mozart seems to pour forth the song of freedom in effortless creativity and thus to elate your soul above this wrestling world. But for heaven's sake do not explain his freedom by anything that you could call transcending man's finiteness.

Beethoven is not less free, though his music is burdened with the grief of the finite creature. He goes the whole way from chaos to order; he retains the creator's pain and joy in the created world. It is in shaking the soul to its roots that he stirs to life its leaves and blossoms. He exults over our finiteness in facing its brazen necessity. That, not escape, is freedom.

I return to the relation of freedom to norms. The rules, in this case the articulate space of tonality, are only the fundament. There is a kind of music, appropriate for exercises, that seems to be content with mere allegiance to rules—similar to passages of correct usage found in grammars as models of applied rules. Obviously mere obedience to rules is never freedom. Freedom is what you do with, and cannot do without, these rules—is in an activity that lets these rules as yours be the fundament of a world as a whole. That holds not only for music, art, or language. It links freedom to culture or civilization as its foundation. But any civilization whatsoever is such a foundation only in so far as it grants such an activity.

In language, as in music, the acrobat who displays masterly skill tempts you to call his skill freedom. But his freedom is negative—freedom from insufficiencies that hamper others. Beyond that negative freedom he is the slave of his desire to startle people by his cunning and his tricks, by playing boldly on the border of what the rules allow. A small thing is lacking, but the only one that matters: he pours no soul into his artifices and shapes no world.

Let me jump to an example of another kind. We say: This man has personality, or even, he is a "real person." We say it in a tone of praise, even of reverence. We know pretty well what we mean, but seldom realize how queer a term we use. No one means merely a charming appearance, intelligence, poise, wealth, position, or even an aggregate of particularities in which a man deviates from an average. A man can have one or all of these qualities and yet not be a real person. We do not think of greatness of ends, cleverness in means, of success or failure. Success does not produce, failure does not prevent a man from being, a personality, though it warps our judgment. What then, you ask, can it be? This mystery, which I

by no means claim to unravel, is a tissue of many strands. In any case it is safe to say: the man is somehow a whole. He behaves, speaks, acts, thinks, as a whole; he displays unity. This "unity" is sometimes simple, never uniform, and always unique. A personality is full of tensions and contrasts, but there is a concord in its very discords, and tension means strength, not weakness. This strange sort of unity unites discrepancies. A field of force radiates a suggestive power which it takes some effort to resist. We may say that this field of force embraces all things with its specific kind of color, light, and air—under a common horizon that has no boundaries.

One does not usually call a youngster a real person. If one does, one means a "potential" person, anticipating a future. Life and activity, resistance and endurance, are needed to shape a personality. The face of a real person shows many a scar. Failure, hardship, passion, effort, strengthen a unity to master stimuli and command responses. This unique unity is an ego and a world, the two as one. In giving to both the same law a real person is actualized freedom.

These examples, however, fail to stress two things without which freedom is not freedom, namely, tolerance and truth. Tolerance seems to mean the political condition that everyone can have his own way and opinion. That is not what I am after. Though tolerant times may have some freedom because of their tolerance, it is better to put it the other way: free times are tolerant because they are free.

The term "world" emphasizes the totality, the infinite horizon. It is a difficult term and easily misleads us into thinking of the sky above or the unbounded space. But it means men, not stars. Our world means the human beings among whom we live. Our world is either in their souls or nowhere. Without them the sky is mute. We are something in and to ourselves in being something in and to others. This "being to others" is part of ourselves—a genuine and not an additional part. Our life is giving and taking, the one in the other. In such give and take our world grows; without it there is no world, only environment. There is no such give and take between the master and his slaves. If man "actualizes" him-

self in others, the others must be free. Only one who is free can return your freedom to you; slaves give back only their servitude. There is a dignity in freedom that you can never have without respecting it in others. Free times are sure of their horizon. The world is wide; it embraces the ways of others though they may differ from yours. The Bostonian saints in their narrow world could not afford to be tolerant, they were far from free. If you are free you can let your friend have his way; only then can he be a friend and open the window of your ego prison. I hope you feel what I mean though it evades expression. Do not play with my words. Freedom is not the only source of tolerance; there is indifference, lack of a Whole and its commitments, laziness of heart. Most tolerance may be of that sort. That is not our concern.

And now as to truth. Here we enter a colder climate of sharper winds. Do not dare to conclude from examples that man "is" free. Let us start by confessing frankly that man is not free. He is a finite being and walks a narrow path in haze and sorrow. "God's scourge drives to graze whatever creeps on earth," says Heraclitus. We live on other beings in need and danger; we near our death exchanging one compulsion for another. Face your finiteness and all it implies.

Man can lie, he can deceive himself as well as others. He can mask a reality that he cannot endure. Most people do; they move in a world of pretense. They elude themselves. Their belief in freedom is merely a part of such elusion. They shut their eyes to the most obvious reality. They are not free. Freedom must brave truth.

I look for freedom in man's relation to his world. Freedom, I say, has to do with man building his own world. I do not mean an arbitrary world, a world of lies and illusions, but this world, the "real" world. The world we build and own, however, is never "this" world, never can be. There is always another world behind and beyond our own world, a world that is never ours. The world we build is only a world in the world. Freedom therefore is concerned not only with our relation to our own world but also, let me say, with the relation between our own world and the "real" world. This relation ought to

be of a particular sort. Our world has to represent the "real" and not a sham world. But here again I must warn you. Even this will not do. The term "real" has a specific meaning which probably is not yours. It is not the kind of reality with which physics or chemistry is concerned. It means the realness in human life. It is this reality that our world must represent, not mask, if we are to be free. In this sense of "real" the world of Shakespeare, though invented, is real. The world of chemistry, exact though it may be, is unreal. It has no relation to human existence; it is no image. It is not even the world "in" which the chemist as a human being lives. The reality I have in mind, even the chemist will find in Shakespeare rather than in his chemistry. That is the kind of truth with which freedom is concerned. Who dares not face man's finiteness should never speak of freedom.

I am pretty sure that you will be disappointed. I have not given you a definition of freedom. And a definition is what you want. You will not find it. If there is freedom, it demands that every girl must bear her children herself. Other people's definitions would mean no more to you than other people's children.

I casually picked up diverse examples, intended to span the range of the problem, gathering the limbs of freedom. These limbs form a body. Apart from the body they have no life. One implies the other. An inner tie binds them into a unity. That, however, is a long tale and cannot be told in a letter, if at all. It would demand an answer to the question, What is Man? This question contains an assertion and a question. Man "is"; what is he? The assertion puts another question, a still odder one, what this "is" is assumed to mean. Never fear; I shall not write a letter that you would never read. Not only will I withhold a definition; I shall even try to spoil the very definition you are likely to hit upon. You may start by differentiating negative from positive freedom. Since the former presupposes the latter, you may say: Man is free if he can be what he ought to be. This definition of a century ago connects negative and positive freedom. It does not sound so bad. But what does "ought" mean? Obviously not any "duty" imposed by

man upon man. There is an old answer: Man ought to "actualize" his "self." My examples even seemed to point to this answer. But both these terms, "actualize" and "self," died long ago through loss of blood. They now have a hollow sound.

"Actualize" obviously means a kind of motion; motion links a wherefrom to a whereto. The wherefrom means your potential self; the whereto the actuality of this potential self. Thus we have two modes of "self"; "actualize" means the transition from the one to the other. But what is this "self"? Why should one's narrow casual self be "actualized" and not rather perish ere its pettiness be manifest?

The first self, the *terminus a quo* of that movement, seems to mean the casual aggregate of diverse potential selves that the accidents of your and your ancestors' births may have gathered in your heritage. What, then, is the second self? The actuality either of all or of any accidental one of these casual selves? Or just that one in which a man differs from other people? The specific difference? But the *differentia specifica* may be quite irrelevant. Or perhaps the opposite: the qualities by which a human being levels off to the average? Obviously neither the one nor the other. The self that has to be actualized is not what we call the self. It is more than the self—in the mode of a self. It is something for which a self stands—a potential world. The self-actualization actualizes something in which the particular self transcends itself and escapes its pettiness.

There are still other dangers in the term. A hundred years ago people sitting in armchairs cultivated their "gentle souls" in musing upon ethical culture and called that self-actualizing. The term suggests isolated individuals, each one actualizing himself for himself. Beware of such suggestion. The world in which alone we can actualize our "selves" is the world of others. We have no actuality without being something to, in, and for others. Do not think of the world as a prison, in which everyone has to actualize himself for himself in his cell by enjoying in safety the righteousness of a gentle soul.

There is a third danger. Actuality does not mean a state which you can reach and preserve. In this queer kind of motion

that is the transition of something called a potential self to something called an actual self the motion is its own *terminus ad quem*. The transition is the end—doing is the work and the work's joy. That is the distinction of such doing. Actuality means activity, but not any one of our activities means that kind of actuality with which human freedom has to do. Here the term self-actualization deserts you. Old Aristotle, its ancestor, insisted: "ἐνέργεια ἔργον." Instead of trying to decipher such enigmatic language I advise you to turn to my examples: the work keeps in store the doing, but in works alone is the doing stored. Such works are the whole of a world; such doing builds a world as a whole. If you are aware of such dangers, go on using the term, but take care that it does not grow arid in daily usage. Most such terms do.

As I near the end of this epistle, I appeal to your brain, in giving you the reasons I had for preferring the appeal to your heart.

Freedom for what? Such was the contemptuous response of Lenin, the first of contemporary dictators, to allusions to freedom's interests in Bolshevik demeanor. If you have no answer to this question there is nothing from which man would be entitled to be free. The dictator faced a world uncertain of an answer.

Men's answers differ and change. History, you say, whirls around the great names. Sociologists and historians (not all, but most of them, and especially those who emphasize their being up-to-date) are eager to demonstrate that any answer is but the answer of a social group, a country, a time. Suspect all evidence gathered by these people; a loud voice and a smiling superiority often mask incertitude.

Certainly, men's answers change. What kinds of answers? Definitions, religious or philosophical formulas in which man thinks of the ends, purposes, goals, for which he wants to be free. Man's heart, however, is aware of a knowledge that does not change though his brain may falter. But the distinction between heart and brain will meet with sneers and laughter. It will certainly not impress the smug partisans of relativity.

They demand more acute terms. I shall try to indicate for what philosophical problem this distinction holds.

William James, analyzing the concept of "self," differentiates between the I and the Me, the knower and the known. Let us follow the lead of this distinction and call the creator of an image of himself "I" and the created image "Me." The I is not the Me. Man poses the question, What is Man? Every age and culture give a different answer. Man, however, as subject of the answer is no longer Man who asks the question. The one is the Me, the other the I. While he is on the way from the I to the Me, making an image of himself, something happens.

Man, I dare say, is a world-building animal. Man builds and shapes his world. This activity is his freedom; freedom is concerned with his relation to his world. In building up his world as a whole in which he lives, he denominates and defines and determines things of both matter and mind. All his determining, or at least most of it, is done in what I call cosmological terms, in terms belonging to, and dependent on, the patterns of the worlds he builds in his religions, philosophies, sciences. He defines Man; he determines his idea of himself, the Me, by virtue of the conceptual scheme in which he orders the phenomena in space and time, the totality of which he calls world. As far as he proceeds in this way, his defining, denominating, determining things, including the Me, risk getting entangled in the historical process and becoming an easy prey to the sociologists of knowledge and the relativistic historians.

That is what happens: The world intervenes between the I and the Me. The Me depends upon our picture of the world. These pictures change, none of these pictures is the world itself. Thus the Me changes, Man's image of himself, and his definition of freedom.

But man is not merely this Me. He is both the I and the Me; he is the activity that leads from the I to the Me in framing a world and determining the Me by virtue of this frame. As freedom has to do with this activity it must keep destroying and remaking its own definition. And that is the reason I appealed to your heart: your heart knows not only about the Me

but also about this movement from the I to the Me and thus about freedom.

I am treading the borders of dangerous questions. You may conclude that, if I am right, something in our way of determining the Me must be wrong. Certainly there is. In determining the Me we ought to retain, not dismiss, the I, the creator in the *creatum*. That is what the American pragmatists try to do in referring Truth and Reality to Man's activity. The trouble is that they go on to determine Man's activity in terms of a Me on the basis of the objective reality which they refute. This is what they no longer can nor should do. But hereby hangs a tale to which you would never listen, concerning the meaning of "is," called ontology. However, that is now merely the name of a name.

The I, man as creator, goes on building, changing, rebuilding, the image of the Me, as a *creatum* among *creata*. If he did not, his life would not be life. He builds his world and stabilizes his building, in an endless tussle with a moving world that never is and never will be the world. He stabilizes the image of the Me. The image hardens, imbedded in institutions. The creator depends on his *creata*. Freedom, however, cannot be invested in any *creatum* as *creatum*. Being activity it resides in the relation between creator and *creatum*. The dependency of the creator on the *creata* ranges between two poles. It can be mere compulsion: the *creatum* restricts and opposes the creator. Freedom can forge its own fetters. Thus it is bound to break them, destroy its own work, devour its definitions—and do so in freedom's name. But the *creatum* can be the basis and stage of further creativity, as in the case of a language. Then the interplay between creator and *creatum* is but the breathing of life. History goes both ways. Neither is the first dialectical necessity, to which you have to submit, nor the second, certitude on which you can rely.

As it is the crux of any definition of human freedom that the definition of the Me must retain the I, so it is the crux of freedom as institution that the work must keep alive the process lest freedom bury itself under the ruins of its works.

As I reread your note I discover two questions not even

touched upon in my answer. The one concerns the freedom of flowers, the other freedom's interest in government interference in business. Since the hour is late, this letter long, and philosophy endless, do kindly permit me to cover both questions in one and the same argument.

Nature is one. Let us assume that flowers "live." As they wither in your hands so life eludes the biochemist who cannot help dissecting in observing. It may be that the secret of life in a flower has something to do with that interplay between creator and *creatum*—philosophers say *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*—in which your own life breathes, grows, blossoms, and fades. If you dare to make such an assumption, you may, out of reverence for such a secret, call flowers free. Flowers, however, are blind and live in darkness. Call them unfree if you want to reserve the great name for Man, because in Man alone nature is conscious of herself—or at least could or should be.

Your father and brother quarrel about freedom's interest in government interference in business or business interference in government. Let us be fair and assume that they are not blind and are not merely reacting like flowers to dumb impulses or pressures. Let them share a hidden awareness about freedom and disagree as to the way. Is not their quarreling just a tiny bit of that same interplay between creator and *creatum?* Human beings, participating in the organic life of a not yet mechanized nation, in quest of an ever uncertain way, move in a moving world, wrestle to fit the *creata* of yesterday into the *creanda* of tomorrow, cling to the one and anticipate the others.

Grant them their quarreling and rely on your heart. All hearts throughout the world and its history beat the answer to the question, Feedom for what? though most ears are either incapable of, or prevented from, hearing the heart beat.

Yours affectionately,

K